# UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

ACCESS 4 ALL, INC., a Florida Non-Profit Corporation, and NELSON M. STERN, Individually,

Plaintiffs,

Case No.: 1:16-cv-04471-VAB

VS.

181 VARICK STREET LLC, a New York Limited Liability Company, and MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, INC., a Delaware Corporation,

Defendants.

#### FIRST AMENDED COMPLAINT

(Injunctive Relief Demanded)

Plaintiffs, ACCESS 4 ALL, INC., a Florida Non-Profit Corporation, and NELSON M. STERN, Individually, on their behalf and on behalf of all other individuals similarly situated, (sometimes referred to as "Plaintiff" or "Plaintiffs"), hereby sue the Defendants, 181 VARICK STREET LLC, a New York Limited Liability Company, and MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL, INC., a Delaware Corporation (sometimes referred to as "Defendant" or "Defendants"), for Injunctive Relief, and attorney's fees, litigation expenses, and costs pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12181 et seq. ("ADA").

- 1. Plaintiff, Nelson M. Stern, is an individual residing in New York, NY, in the County of New York.
- 2. Plaintiff, ACCESS 4 ALL, INC., is a non-profit corporation formed under the laws of the State of Florida. ACCESS 4 ALL, INC. maintains its principal office in the County of Broward.

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3. Defendants' property, a hotel named the Courtyard New York Manhattan/Soho, is

located at 181 Varick Street, New York, NY, in the County of New York.

4. Venue is properly located in the Southern District of New York because venue

lies in the judicial district of the property situs. The Defendants' property is located in and does

business within this judicial district.

5. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331 and 28 U.S.C. § 1343, this Court has been given

original jurisdiction over actions which arise from the Defendants' violations of Title III of the

Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12181 et seq. See also 28 U.S.C. § 2201 and §

2202.

6. Plaintiff Nelson M. Stern is a New York resident, is sui juris, and qualifies as an

individual with disabilities as defined by the ADA. Mr. Stern has multiple sclerosis and is

mobility impaired, and uses an electric scooter to ambulate. Nelson M. Stern visited the property

which forms the basis of this lawsuit. He plans to return to the property on January 19, 2017 to

avail himself of the goods and services offered to the public at the property, if the Hotel is fully

accessible and the barriers to access have been corrected. The Plaintiff has encountered

architectural barriers at the subject property, which have impaired Mr. Stern's use of the

guestroom and toilet room, and have endangered his safety at the hotel and his ability to access

the hotel's facilities, including the bar at the rooftop lounge. The Plaintiff is also a member of

the Plaintiff organization, ACCESS 4 ALL, INC., discussed below in paragraph 7.

7. Plaintiff ACCESS 4 ALL, INC., is a nonprofit Florida corporation. Members of

this organization include individuals with disabilities as defined by the ADA, and are

representative of a cross-section of the disabilities to be protected from discrimination by the

ADA. The purpose of this organization is to represent the interest of its members by assuring

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places of public accommodation are accessible to and usable by the disabled and that its

members are not discriminated against because of their disabilities. ACCESS 4 ALL, INC. and

its members have suffered and will continue to suffer direct and indirect injury as a result of the

Defendants' discrimination until the Defendants are compelled to comply with the requirements

of the ADA. One or more of its members has suffered an injury that would allow it to bring suit

in its own right. ACCESS 4 ALL, INC. has also been discriminated against because of its

association with its disabled members and their claims.

8. Defendants own, lease, lease to, or operate a place of public accommodation as

defined by the ADA and the regulations implementing the ADA, 28 CFR 36.201(a) and 36.104.

Defendants are responsible for complying with the obligations of the ADA. The place of public

accommodation that the Defendants own, operate, lease or lease to is known as the Courtyard

New York Manhattan/Soho, located at 181 Varick Street, New York, NY.

9. ACCESS 4 ALL, INC. and Nelson M. Stern have a realistic, credible, existing

and continuing threat of discrimination from the Defendants' non-compliance with the ADA with

respect to this property as described but not necessarily limited to the allegations in paragraph 11

of this First Amended Complaint. Plaintiffs have reasonable grounds to believe that they will

continue to be subjected to discrimination in violation of the ADA by the Defendants. Nelson

M. Stern desires to visit the Courtyard New York Manhattan/Soho not only to avail himself of

the goods and services available at the property, but to assure himself that this property is in

compliance with the ADA so that he and others similarly situated will have full and equal

enjoyment of the property without fear of discrimination.

10. The Defendants have discriminated against the individual Plaintiff and members

of the corporate Plaintiff organization by denying them access to, and full and equal enjoyment

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of, the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and/or accommodations of the buildings,

as prohibited by 42 U.S.C. § 12182 et seq.

11. The Defendants have discriminated, and are continuing to discriminate, against

the Plaintiff in violation of the ADA by failing to, inter alia, have accessible facilities by January

26, 1992 (or January 26, 1993, if Defendants have 10 or fewer employees and gross receipts of

\$500,000 or less). A preliminary inspection of the Courtyard New York Manhattan/Soho has

shown that violations exist. These violations that Mr. Stern has personally observed or

encountered include, but are not limited to:

a. Accessible seating is not provided in or outside the restaurants/bars. This

is in violation of section 4.32 of the 1991 Standards for Accessible Design.

b. Inside the hotel accessible toilet compartment the flush control is on the

narrow side of the water closet. This is in violation of sections 4.16.5 and 4.22.4 of the

1991 Standards for Accessible Design.

c. Inside the hotel accessible toilet compartment an appropriate rear grab

bar in not provided behind the water closet. This is in violation of sections 4.16.4 and

4.22.4 of the 1991 Standards for Accessible Design.

d. Inside the hotel accessible toilet compartment an appropriate side grab

bar in not provided by the water closet. This is in violation of sections 4.16.4 and 4.22.4

of the 1991 Standards for Accessible Design.

e. Inside the hotel accessible toilet compartment the side grab bar is too

high. This is in violation of sections 4.16.4 and 4.22.4 of the 1991 Standards for

Accessible Design.

f. A clear floor space is not provided in the hotel accessible toilet

compartment. This is in violation of section 4.22.4 of the 1991 Standards for Accessible

Design.

g. Inside the hotel accessible toilet compartment the mirror is too high for a

person using a wheelchair. This is in violation of sections 4.19.6 and 4.22.6 of the 1991

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#### Standards for Accessible Design.

- h. The door to the hotel accessible toilet compartment door has hardware that requires tight grasping, tight pinching or twisting of the wrist to operate. This is in violation of sections 4.13.9 and 4.22.2 of the 1991 Standards for Accessible Design.
- i. An appropriate maneuvering clearance is not provided to exit the hotel accessible toilet compartment. This is in violation of sections 4.13.6 and 4.22.2 of the 1991 Standards for Accessible Design.
- j. Elements inside the hotel accessible toilet compartment are out of reach to a person using a wheelchair. This is in violation of section 4.27.3 of the 1991 Standards for Accessible Design.
- k. A clear floor space is not provided around the bed. This is in violation of section 9.2.2(1) of the 1991 Standards for Accessible Design.
- l. The threshold to the accessible guest bathroom has a change in level. This is in violation of section 9.2.2(3) of the 1991 Standards for Accessible Design.
- m. Inside the accessible guest bathroom an appropriate rear grab bar in not provided behind the water closet. This is in violation of section 9.2.2(6) of the 1991 Standards for Accessible Design.
- n. The shower unit in the accessible guest room bathroom shower is mounted out of reach to a person using a wheelchair. This is in violation of sections 4.23.8 and 9.2.2(6) of the 1991 Standards for Accessible Design.
- o. Controls inside the accessible guestroom and bathroom are out of reach to a person using a wheelchair. This is in violation of sections 4.27.3 and 9.2.2(5) of the 1991 Standards for Accessible Design.
- p. Controls inside the accessible guestroom and bathroom require tight grasping, pinching and twisting of the wrist to operate. This is in violation of sections 4.27.4 and 9.2.2(5) of the 1991 Standards for Accessible Design.
- q. A clear floor space is not provided by the water closet in the accessible guest bathroom. This is in violation of sections 4.16.2, 4.22.4 and 9.2.2(6) of the 1991 Standards for Accessible Design.

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r. The hotel only offers guest rooms with views to abled body guests. This is in violation of section 9.1.2 of the 1991 Standards for Accessible Design. §36.201

s. The hotel does not provide the required amount of accessible guest rooms. This is in violation of section 9.1.4(1) of the 1991 Standards for Accessible

Design.

t. A person with disabilities cannot make reservations for accessible guest rooms during the same hours and in the same manner as individuals who do not need

accessible rooms. This is in violation of §36.302(e)(1)(i-v)(3).

12. The discriminatory violations described in paragraph 11 are not an exclusive list

of the Defendants' ADA violations. Plaintiffs require the inspection of the Defendants' place of

public accommodation in order to photograph and measure all of the discriminatory acts

violating the ADA and all of the barriers to access. The individual Plaintiff, the members of the

Plaintiff group, and all other individuals similarly situated, have been denied access to, and have

been denied the benefits of services, programs and activities of the Defendants' buildings and its

facilities, and have otherwise been discriminated against and damaged by the Defendants

because of the Defendants' ADA violations, as set forth above. The individual Plaintiff, the

members of the Plaintiff group and all others similarly situated will continue to suffer such

discrimination, injury and damage without the immediate relief provided by the ADA as

requested herein. In order to remedy this discriminatory situation, the Plaintiff requires an

inspection of the Defendants' place of public accommodation in order to determine all of the

areas of non-compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

13. Defendants have discriminated against the individual and corporate Plaintiffs by

denying them access to full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges,

advantages and/or accommodations of its place of public accommodation or commercial facility

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in violation of 42 U.S.C. § 12181 et seg. and 28 CFR 36.302 et seg. Furthermore, the

Defendants continue to discriminate against the Plaintiff, and all those similarly situated by

failing to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices or procedures, when such

modifications are necessary to afford all offered goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages

or accommodations to individuals with disabilities; and by failing to take such efforts that may

be necessary to ensure that no individual with a disability is excluded, denied services,

segregated or otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the absence of

auxiliary aids and services.

14. Plaintiffs are without adequate remedy at law and are suffering irreparable harm.

Considering the balance of hardships between the Plaintiffs and Defendants, a remedy in equity

is warranted. Furthermore, the public interest would not be disserved by a permanent injunction.

Plaintiffs have retained the undersigned counsel and are entitled to recover attorney's fees, costs

and litigation expenses from the Defendants pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12205 and 28 CFR 36.505.

15. Defendants are required to remove the existing barriers to the physically disabled

when such removal is readily achievable for its place of public accommodation that have existed

prior to January 26, 1992, 28 CFR 36.304(a); in the alternative, if there has been an alteration to

Defendants' place of public accommodation since January 26, 1992, then the Defendants are

required to ensure to the maximum extent feasible, that the altered portions of the facility are

readily accessible to and useable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use

wheelchairs, 28 CFR 36.402; and finally, if the Defendants' facility is one which was designed

and constructed for first occupancy subsequent to January 26, 1993, as defined in 28 CFR

36.401, then the Defendants' facility must be readily accessible to and useable by individuals

with disabilities as defined by the ADA.

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16. Notice to Defendants is not required as a result of the Defendants' failure to cure

the violations by January 26, 1992 (or January 26, 1993, if Defendants have 10 or fewer

employees and gross receipts of \$500,000 or less). All other conditions precedent have been met

by Plaintiffs or waived by the Defendants.

17. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12188, this Court is provided with authority to grant

Plaintiffs Injunctive Relief, including an order to require the Defendants to alter the Courtyard

New York Manhattan/Soho to make those facilities readily accessible and useable to the

Plaintiffs and all other persons with disabilities as defined by the ADA; or by closing the facility

until such time as the Defendants cure their violations of the ADA.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs respectfully request:

a. The Court issue a Declaratory Judgment that determines that the

Defendants at the commencement of the subject lawsuit are in violation of Title III of the

Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12181 et seq.

b. Injunctive relief against the Defendants including an order to make all

readily achievable alterations to the facility; or to make such facility readily accessible to

and usable by individuals with disabilities to the extent required by the ADA; and to

require the Defendants to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices or

procedures, when such modifications are necessary to afford all offered goods, services,

facilities, privileges, advantages or accommodations to individuals with disabilities; and

by failing to take such steps that may be necessary to ensure that no individual with a

disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or otherwise treated differently than

other individuals because of the absence of auxiliary aids and services.

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- An award of attorney's fees, costs and litigation expenses pursuant to 42 c. U.S.C. § 12205.
- d. Such other relief as the Court deems just and proper, and/or is allowable under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: August 23, 2016 /s/ Lawrence A. Fuller

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-and-

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## **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

**I HEREBY CERTIFY** that a true copy of this document was filed via CM/ECF this 23rd day of August, 2016.

**I FURTHER CERTIFY** that each of the Defendants will be served via service of process, as follows: 181 Varick Street LLC c/o New York State Department of State at the address indicated at the Division of Corporations entity information website, and Marriott International, Inc. c/o Corporate Creatons Network Inc., 15 North Mill Street, Nyack, NY 10960.

/s/ Lawrence A. Fuller

Lawrence A. Fuller, Esq. (LF 5450) FULLER, FULLER & ASSOCIATES, P.A. Counsel for Plaintiffs Access 4 All, Inc. and Nelson M. Stern 12000 Biscayne Blvd., Suite 502 North Miami, FL 33181 (305) 891-5199 (305) 893-9505 - Facsimile Lfuller@fullerfuller.com -and-Nelson M. Stern, Esq. (NS 8646) NELSON M. STERN ATTORNEY AT LAW Co-Counsel for Plaintiff Access 4 All, Inc. 115 East 87th St., Suite 7C New York, NY 10128 (917) 774-1330 (212) 717-4061 - Facsimile scooterlawyer@aol.com